Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: May 10, 2011

TO: Use and Management Committee

THROUGH: Steve Abbors, General Manager

FROM: Kirk Lenington, Senior Resource Planner

SUBJECT: Consideration of Draft Agricultural Management Plan for the Lobitos Ridge Property, Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve and an Advisory Recommendation to the District Board of Directors

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Project Summary
The District purchased the 340-acre Lobitos Ridge property from Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) in 2010. As part of this transaction, the District proposed to continue the agricultural use on 7 acres of the property through the assignment of the existing agricultural lease to the District until a long-term agricultural lease could be developed in accordance with the District's Coastside Service Plan (CSP). To inform the long-term agricultural lease, as required by the CSP, an Agricultural Management Plan has been developed for the farmed 7 acres on the property. If supported by the Use and Management Committee and approved by the Board, the Agricultural Management Plan would be implemented as an amendment to the Preliminary Use and Management Plan and a new lease executed with the existing agricultural tenant.

Staff Recommendation
Review and accept the attached Agricultural Management Plan as an amendment to the Preliminary Use and Management Plan.

Discussion
The Draft Agricultural Management Plan is being brought to the Use and Management Committee for review and discussion prior to adoption of a Use and Management Plan Amendment by the full Board of Directors. The Agricultural Plan was drafted by the District's consultant, Mr. Mike Gatzman, and includes guidelines to assist and promote sustainable farming practices to preserve the productive agricultural qualities of the property. Sustainable farming practices include those that are economically feasible, environmentally sound, and socially responsible. There are three major elements to the plan: 1) Farming Techniques; 2) Soil Management; and 3) Sanitation, plus miscellaneous items important to this site. The plan is intended to be an adaptive management plan and is subject to change as site-specific conditions may warrant and as the status of the agricultural industry may indicate, all at the discretion of the District.

Staff presented the Draft Agricultural Management Plan to the San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee on April 11, 2011. The comments received from the Advisory Committee

are attached to this report for the Use and Management Committee's review. In addition to review and discussion by the Advisory Committee, staff also consulted with several members of the San Mateo County Farm Bureau to discuss agricultural practices in San Mateo County and specific aspects of the Lobitos Ridge Agricultural Management Plan. These discussions provided valuable contributions to the Agricultural Management Plan.

Next steps

Following the consideration of the Draft Agricultural Management Plan by the Use and Management Committee, staff will incorporate edits and changes requested by the Committee to the Agricultural Management Plan. The Use and Management Plan amendment is scheduled to go before the full Board of Directors on June 8, 2011 along with a lease for the agricultural portions of the property. This meeting will be held in Half Moon Bay at the Half Moon Bay Fire Station.

Attachments

Draft Lobitos Ridge Agricultural Management Plan
Comments from the San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee

DRAFT—MANAGEMENT PLAN

LOBITOS RIDGE FARMING GROUND

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

REV. April 30, 2011

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The farming ground under consideration for this Management Plan consists of approximately seven acres that is a portion of a larger 340-acre Lobitos Ridge Area of the Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. The address is 2050 Purisima Creek Road, Half Moon Bay, within San Mateo County, California (Assessor Parcel Number 066-230-030). The site is located within Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (District) Coastside Protection Area and zoned as a "Planned Agricultural District" per Chapter 21A of San Mateo County Codes. The ranch is approximately two miles east of Highway 1 and three miles east of the Pacific Ocean on the south side of Purisima Creek Road. (Exhibits 1 and 2)

The area under consideration consists of two rectangular farming parcels bisected by the driveway to the building compound area. The farm ground is primarily Tunitas Clay Loam with a two to five percent south-facing slope. This soil is rated as a "Capability Class II", with a Storie Index of 68, which is considered prime soils for vegetable and flower production by both the USDA and San Mateo County. Irrigation water is supplied by a pumping system from Purisma Creek with quantities allocated by an adjudication order of the Superior Court of San Mateo County. The residences on this parcel also have a domestic use allocation adjudicated under the same proceedings. There are two residences and three farm buildings located between the farm ground and the riparian area on the north side of Purisima Creek (Exhibit 3).

GOALS OF THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Mission Statement of the MROSD is "*To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity; protect and restore the natural environment; and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education."* The Mission Statement for the Coastside Protection Area is *"To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.* This farm is within the Coastside Protection Area and the principals and policies embodied in both the District Mission Statement and the Coastside Protection Area Service Plan are the guiding principals for this site-specific management plan.

This plan provides for guidelines to assist and promote sustainable farming practices to preserve the productive agricultural qualities of the property. Sustainable farming practices include those that are economically feasible, environmentally sound, and socially responsible. There are three major elements to this plan: 1) Farming Techniques; 2) Soil Management; and 3) Sanitation, plus miscellaneous items important to this site. This plan is intended to be an adaptive management plan and is subject to change as site-specific conditions may warrant and as the status of the agricultural industry may indicate, all at the discretion of the District.

1. FARMING TECHNIQUES—ORGANIC OR CONVENTIONAL

An agreement on the approach to farming techniques between the District and tenant is critical and forms the boundaries for all on-site activities.

This farm is well suited for the production of vegetables, pumpkins, specialty niche crops (such as green beans, peas, peppers, berries, salad greens, herbs, etc.) and field flowers. This is demonstrated by the USDA Soil Survey and by the agronomic success of on-site production and that of numerous farms in the vicinity with similar soil types and microclimates. While it is recognized that different production methods may be required for various crops, the District prefers that the California Certified Organic Farming (CCOF) methodology or, if the tenant is not under CCOF certification, organic growing techniques be employed. However, conventional farming techniques are acceptable production methods. In addition, the growing techniques of any farming system shall follow Best Management Practices (BMPs) methods as defined by the University of California Cooperative Extension Service and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. These practices are defined and employed on a case-by-case basis and dependant upon conditions encountered at the time the issue arises. They are generally defined as a series of sustainable and conservation practices that have been developed, scientifically tested, and determined to be effective conservation and sustainability practices. Each practice employed is specific to a crop, a location, weather conditions, soil type and health, slope, pest management program(s), weed control plans, irrigation techniques and practices, air and water quality considerations and other environmental factors, existing physical features, endangered species, management ability of the operator, existing regulations, and any other factor(s) that may influence the issue under consideration. This methodology considers all influencing factors for each event to determine the technique(s) to employ that will promote conservation and sustainability for the site.

If conventional farming techniques are employed on this site, in addition to BMPs, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques, as defined by the crop specific University of California Cooperative Extension Service (UCCE) guidelines, shall be utilized. IPM techniques should also be utilized for organic production methods. Note that the IPM guidelines are currently available for major California crops but specific publications for those crops grown in this area have yet to be published. However, the approach to the application of IPM techniques is consistent across all crops and easily adapted to specific local situations. IPM entails the use of natural predators to control pests at or below

economic threshold levels. Should damage exceed economic thresholds, or pest numbers grow to levels that cannot be controlled by natural predators, then and only then will chemical control be utilized. Chemical control consists of using the least toxic material to control the specific issue. This approach is consistent with the District Integrated Pest Management Definition, which is attached for reference as Exhibit 4.

In order to assist with, monitor, and control the IPM program, as well as an organic growing plan, the application of any pesticide, or the use of fertilizers or soil amendments, the District will retain the services of a licensed Pest Control Advisor (PCA) who is familiar with local crops and the application of IPM techniques to those crops. The application of any pesticide, fertilizer, or soil amendment must be approved by the PCA prior to its use.

Agro-Chemicals:

The use of crop pesticides is anticipated, regardless of the farming techniques employed. Certain chemicals have been certified for organic growing methods and others for conventional use. Should non-chemical control methods not mitigate the particular issue, the district will require (1) notification prior to application of any chemical on the site, (2) that the chemical or compound comply with the District's Integrated Pest Management Policy, (3) the District, through its Pest Control Advisor, gives written prior approval of each application, and (4) the site be posted per District Policy. In all instances, federal, state, and/or local rules and regulations with respect to crop suitability, storage, mixing, application, reentry, and time to harvest intervals, as well as other special conditions as they may apply, will be followed. A pesticide use permit must be obtained from the County Agricultural Commissioner each year prior to any application of chemicals and a copy of the pesticide use report that is filed with the County Agricultural Commissioner on a monthly basis will be provided to the District.

The District intends to adopt an agro-chemical and pesticide policy. Until such policy is approved, the District's Pest Control Advisor will act as the authority for all agro-chemical and pesticide use requests by tenant.

Given the nature of invasive pests and their effect on regional agriculture, should any regulatory agency, be it federal, state, and/or local, require the application of a pesticide to assist in the eradication of an invasive pest, tenant will comply and be responsible for the fulfillment of said order. Application of the pesticide will comply with the "Agro-Chemical" procedures notes in the above paragraphs.

2. SOIL MANAGEMENT

The prevention of erosion, and the maintenance and enhancement of soil fertility is the second element of this plan.

Erosion and Sediment Control:

Given the prevalent soil type, erosion is not considered a serious potential issue, if proper safeguards are employed. Grading of this site is precluded without the prior written consent of the District. Grading does not include normal field plowing, disking, cultivation, etc., but does include earth work and movement on non-cultivated portions of the site such as, but not limited to driveways, borders, and building areas. Water, from any source, should not be channelized, except that the district may channel storm water under emergency conditions or a conservation plan, or the tenant may do so only with the prior written consent of the District. The soil should not be worked when wet or late in the fall when heavy rains could potentially cause runoff issues. The use of winter cover crops is encouraged. Currently, there are no indications of erosion from the farming areas. However, if erosion becomes a problem, winter cover crops may be required. A vegetated buffer on the south end of the two farming blocks may be required to filter any runoff from the fields prior to its entry to the Purisima Creek riparian area (Exhibit 2). The vegetated buffer should be of sufficient width and height to mitigate potential erosion and installed and maintained according to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Standards. As with Best Management Practices, these NRCS Standards are site, crop, and time specific and include, but are not limited to, the farming techniques utilized, soil types, pesticide programs, irrigation techniques and practices, slope of the site, cover crops, anticipated weather conditions and environmental features present or anticipated. Depending on the influencing factors, the vegetated buffer may be as narrow as five (5) feet or as wide as fifty (50) feet. Plant species to be utilized are also site specific with consideration given to water requirements, maintenance, and existing and surrounding vegetation. The location of the potential vegetated buffer would be at the south end of the farming areas. Livestock that may be permitted by the District on this farm will not impugn or damage the integrity of the vegetated buffers, if they are required.

Soil Amendments and Fertilizers:

In order to promote and insure a sustainable soil, and to replace the nutrients utilized by the past season's crop(s), the soil condition and health must be monitored. The District will collect and pay for nutrient soil analyses at the end of each growing season, generally considered November-December (See Exhibit 5 and Exhibit 6 for details of soil sampling, and a generalized soil test interpretative guideline). Note that these guidelines are "general" and crop specific recommendations will vary somewhat from these norms. However, the norms in Exhibit 6 represent a healthy soil. It will be the responsibility of the tenant to properly amend the soil as the analyses may indicate to maintain the fertility to at least the levels as determined at the inception of any lease. However, any and all soil amendments, including manures and composts, will be approved by the District, through its PCA prior to their application. This will include the timing of said application as well as the product(s) that may be used. The first year's analyses will be considered as the baseline from which to manage the fertility.

3. SANITATION

This third key element to sustainability and good management involves the prevention of rodents, insect and plant diseases, and promotes the health and safety of farm products and workers through sanitary farming practices.

Farm Labor Health:

There are numerous State and Federal laws governing the health and sanitary practices for farm labor. One of the more important aspects for worker safety and health is adequate and clean bathrooms and wash facilities. Complying with these numerous code sections will help to reduce the spread of certain human and crop diseases and promote agricultural product safety. All federal, state, and/or local laws must be strictly adhered to.

Weed Control:

It is a well-established fact that weeds, either native or invasive, and within the field or around borders, can be incubation sites for plant diseases and a breeding area for rodents or insects. Management and control of weedy plant species is a required component of any farming plan. However, under an integrated pest management system, certain weedy plant species provide habitat for beneficial insects that control target pests. In order to lower the risk of incubation of plant diseases, rodents and invasive pests, and for aesthetic purposes, weeds should generally be removed. However, on a case-by-case basis, certain weedy plants may remain or be cultivated to manage invasive issues. Consultation with the District's PCA will be required when weedy plant species are to remain or be introduced.

Control methods of weedy plants will be based on the farming methods agreed upon by the District and Tenant (organic or conventional). If organic farming has been approved, weeds may be controlled by flaming, mowing, mulching, disking or other mechanical methods, covering with weed mats, hoeing or hand removal. Depending on the crop, a combination of techniques may be applicable. If conventional farming methods have been approved by the District, any of the organic techniques are acceptable, or they may be utilized in combination with chemical control. Chemical control will require that the procedures set forth under the "Agro-Chemical" section above, be strictly followed.

Nuisances:

Garbage and refuse shall be kept in tightly closed containers and disposed off-site on a regular basis. If any product processing is conducted on-site, trimmings and culls will not be accumulated. They are to be routinely returned to the fields for plow-down or composting, or they may be hauled off-site. Should the District permit livestock, manure will not be allowed to accumulate in confined areas where it may attract flies or other

pests. Other trash or hazards that may attract any type of pest or act as an incubation area for plant diseases, insects or rodents must be regularly disposed off-site.

OTHER SITE-SPECIFIC ISSUES

Agricultural Irrigation and Water Use:

Irrigation water is available from Purisima Creek under an adjudication order of the Superior Court of San Mateo County. That order allows this property to use up to 10,900 gallons per day as a second priority water right when Purisima Creek flows at least 0.75 CFS, (336 gpm) as measured at the Upper Purisima Creek Road Bridge. Given the source of irrigation water, there is no guarantee that sufficient water will always be available in quantities necessary to produce certain crops. Tenant should plan the cropping program with the pumping limits and potential restrictions in mind.

A pump and delivery system for agricultural water has been installed by the District and is capable of handling the water allocation. Tenant is responsible for the operation, maintenance and repair of the pumps and buried pipelines (Exhibit 7), and for any field application hardware necessary to irrigate crops.

Given the amount of water allocated under the Order, and including Best Management Practices in the irrigation application techniques, drip tape, micro irrigation emitters or sprinklers are acceptable methods of application. Furrow or flood applications are not permitted. Tenant will assure that the water application does not cause erosion, and that there is no irrigation water runoff into Purisima Creek. Additionally, tenant will comply with all water regulations including those of the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Special attention needs to be given to the rainwater runoff from Purisima Creek Road that tends to saturate the northern ends of both blocks, and to the lower contour area at the south end on the west farming block to ensure that erosion does not occur.

On-Site Processing of Agricultural Products:

Limited processing of agricultural products grown on-site may occur with the prior written consent of the District. Limited processing may include trimming, washing, or packaging of products. Details of the intended processing activity must be submitted with the request. If permission is granted for this activity: (1) All waste water will be properly treated, filtered and disposed of in the growing area and not allowed to run into Purisima Creek: (2) Crop residue will be returned to the fields; and (3) The processing area will be cleaned at the end of each day that product processing occurs.

Non-Farming Areas on the Site:

Three barns (outbuildings) are available for tenant's use (Exhibit 3). These outbuildings are in good repair and shall be maintained by tenant. They may be used to house tractors when not in use, store agricultural equipment, supplies, farm products produced on-site,

or as a farm shop. No structures may be constructed, altered, or removed without the prior written consent of the District. Portable storage containers may be utilized only with District's prior written consent.

Environmental Compliance:

The storage of petroleum products will comply with all regulations with respect to quantities and containment basins. San Mateo County Environmental Health Department has these requirements available. Regular servicing of tractors and equipment will be permitted but extreme care must be taken to avoid spills of petroleum products. Major overhauls and repairs to tractors and other motorized equipment or vehicles may be completed on-site if accomplished on an impervious surface, such as concrete, and no petroleum products or other fluids are spilled on or into the soil. All products spilled on the concrete will be cleaned up and properly disposed.

Any materials registered with the Environmental Protection Agency will require special storage conditions, per the label on that product. This includes but is not limited to most agro-chemicals. The spilling of any registered material (including fuel spills) must be reported to the San Mateo County Environmental Health Agency and the District on a timely basis.

Roads and Parking Areas:

Tenant will assure that vehicle and/or equipment use do not cause erosion to driveways supporting the agricultural buildings. Methods to prevent damage may include mowed cover crops on less frequently used roads or gravel on the main travel portions of the access roads, as may be required. The areas over the septic systems and leach fields (Exhibit 7) shall not be planted due to the nature of the advanced disposal systems, and travel or parking of vehicles or farm equipment in those areas is not permitted. Native grasses, as approved by the District, may be grown, but not irrigated.

Riparian Area:

The riparian area for Purisma Creek is noted on Exhibit 2. No farming activity may be undertaken in that area. Furthermore, any activity, except maintenance of vegetated buffers, must be set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from the northern edge of the tree line of the riparian area (Exhibit 2) or further, at the direction of the District.

Owl Nesting Box:

A nesting box is located on the large wooden barn in the southeast corned of the site. This is considered to be a biological rodent control method and will be maintained by the District under District Guidelines (Exhibit 8).

GENERAL SITE APPEARANCE

The property is owned by a public agency. As such, the guiding rules should be a, sanitary and well-organized site that is clean and neat in appearance. To that end, roads should be well maintained and erosion from runoff limited. Trees outside of the riparian area (Exhibit 2) should be maintained and trimmed. Weeds must be controlled either by mowing, grazing, flaming, or the use of an approved herbicide. Tractors will be garaged in the large barn when not in use and implements will be stored in the specified area (Exhibit 3). All supplies will be stored inside of the outbuildings and the outbuildings will be maintained in good order. Non-operating vehicles will not be stored on site.

OTHER ITEMS

One on-site agricultural product farm stand may be permitted at the District's option, if located in the non-farmed area and traffic is not substantial. The District encourages tenant to discuss improvements that would add to the long term agricultural production values and enhance the natural resources of the site. To that end, an improvement program proposed by the tenant may be considered in exchange for rent credits. A rental credit request must be submitted to the District, in writing, prior to tenant undertaking the proposed project. The District will review the request on a timely basis and inform tenant of its decision. Annual rent credits shall not exceed the annual rents.

The farming techniques and operations shall have no adverse impact on neighboring farming, grazing, rural residential or other activities.

MONITORING PLAN

The District requires that District personnel and District PCA meet semi-annually with tenant to review the status of the site and tenant's operation with respect to the conditions of the lease and this Management Plan.

Any corrective actions identified and discussed during this meeting will be memorialized through a follow-up letter from the District.

SUMMARY

This Management Plan is intended to guide the District and tenant to ensure protections for the farm and its natural resources. It encompasses the three critical areas of concern identified by the District, plus site-specific issues. As such, it should be considered an adaptive plan and modified as conditions may change or warrant.

LIST OF EXHIBITS

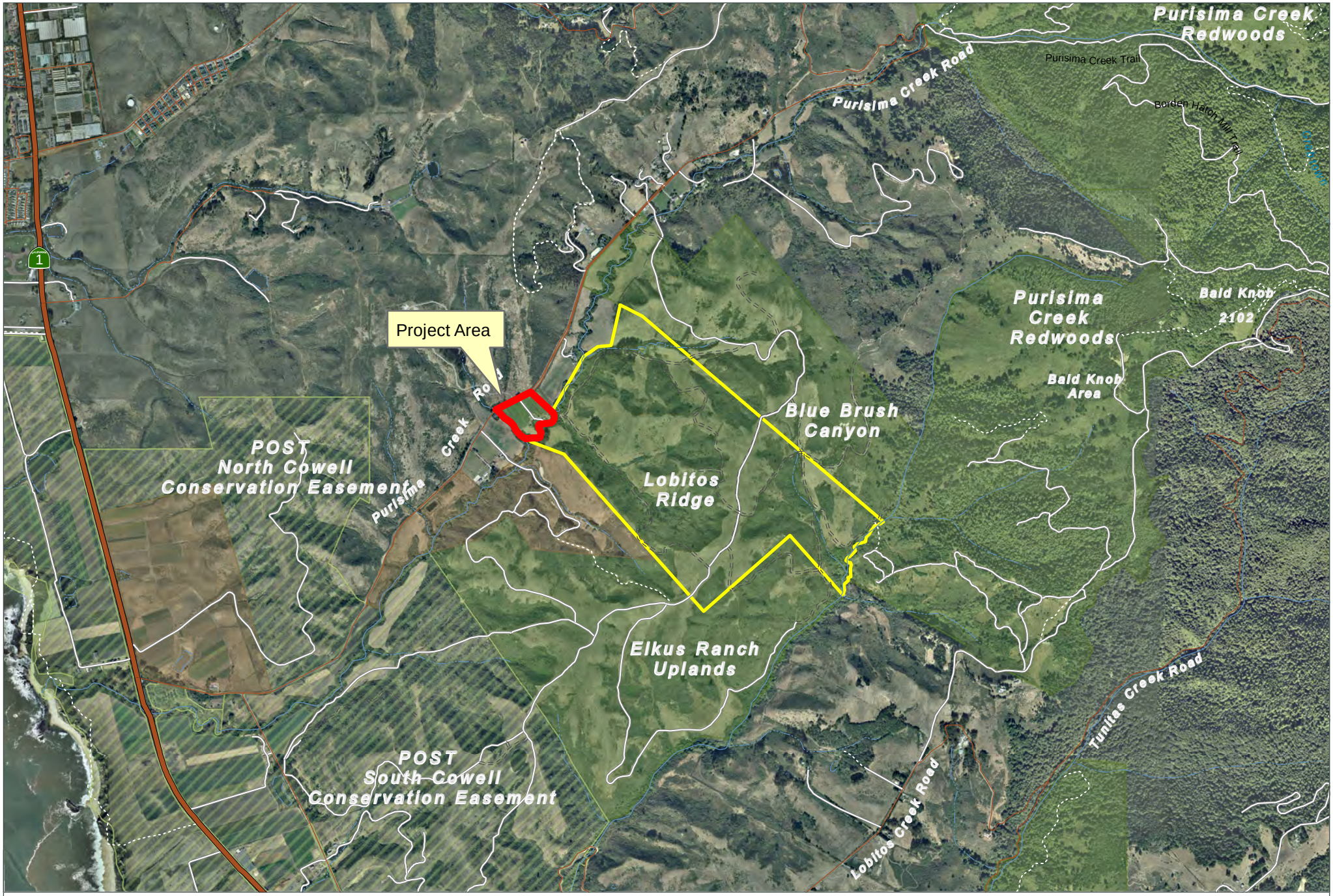

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Exhibit 1

- MROSD
- Other Protected Open Space or Park Lands
- Conservation or Agricultural Easement
- Other Public Agency

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

February 2011

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

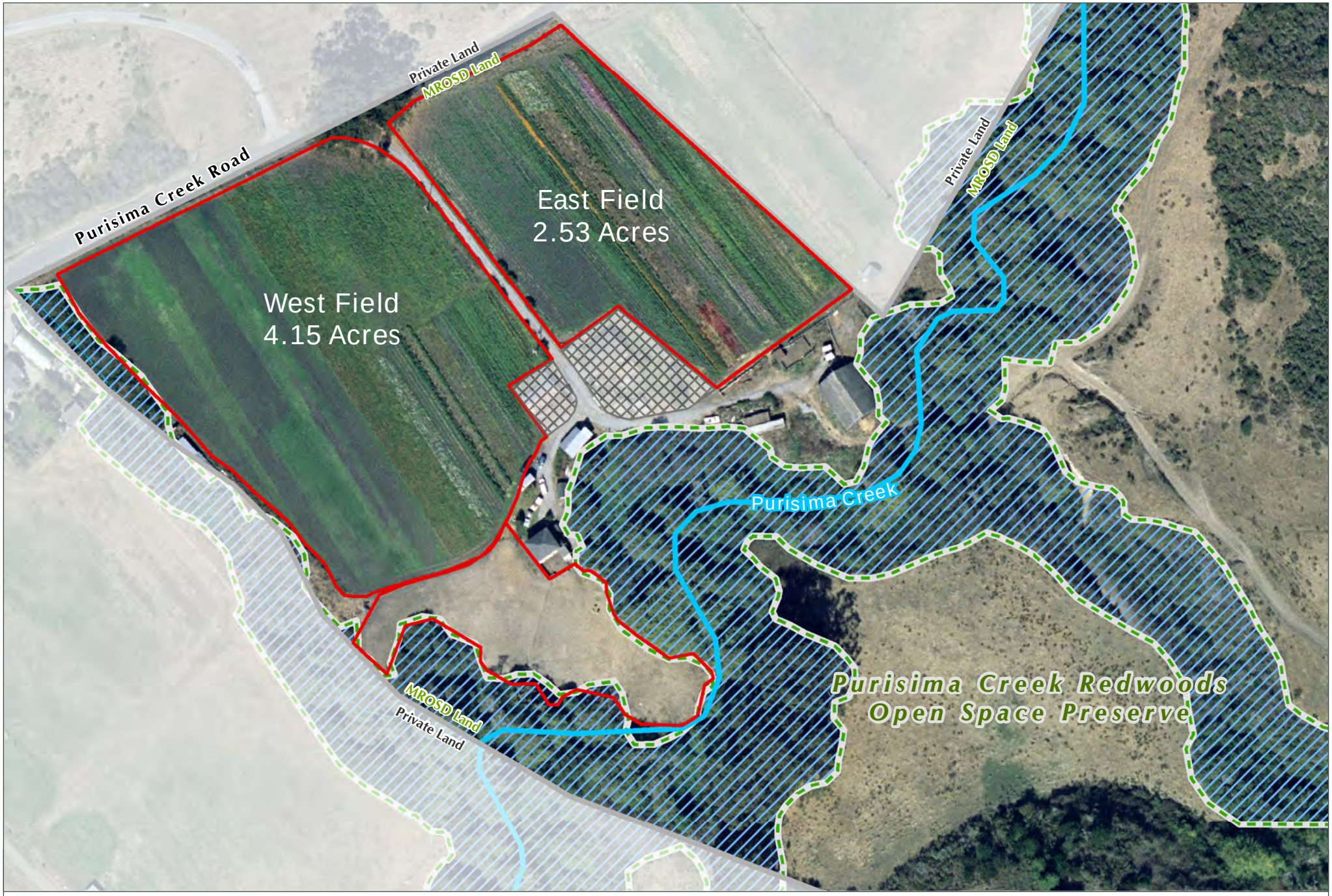

Exhibit 2: Lobitos Ridge Farm Lease - Riparian Corridor and Tree Line

Riparian Corridor

Lobitos Agriculture Fields

Separate Residential Lease
Not Included in Ag Lease

Tree Line

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

January 2011

Feet
0 25 50 100

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Exhibit 3: Lobitos Ridge Farm Lease - Lease Designation Areas and Acreages

Lobitos Agriculture Fields

Separate Residential Lease
Not Included in Ag Lease

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January 2011

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Exhibit 4

MROSD's definition of Integrated Pest Management as stated by the Resource Management Policy is:

> **Integrated pest management (IPM) is a long-term strategy that specifically reviews alternatives and monitors conditions to effectively control a target pest with minimum impact to human health, the environment and non-target organisms.** IPM can be used for many types of pests and situations (e.g. landscape weeds, ants in houses, thistles invading native grasslands). Chemical and non-chemical techniques considered, and techniques will vary according to site conditions or as conditions at a treatment site change over time. If pesticides are necessary to meet a pest control objective, the least toxic and most target-specific pesticide is chosen. IPM requires knowledge of the biology of pests, the available methods for controlling them, and the secondary effects of these methods. It also requires monitoring site conditions before, during and after treatment to determine if objectives are being met and if methods need to be revised.

Exhibit 5

NUTRIENT ANALYSES – SOIL SAMPLING

Soil samples should be collected and analyzed at the end of each growing season to assure that soil conditions are stable or improving. This technique is a primary measure of soil health and productivity potential for the farm. Different crops utilize different amounts of nutrients from the soil and those nutrients must be replaced to ensure the long-term viability of this basic resource.

Sampling:

a. Should be completed at the end of the growing season (generally November or December).

b. Using a soil probe, take a continuous soil sample from the surface down to the lowest level of the root zone for the crop(s) just harvested. Insure that no surface vegetative material is included in the sample.

c. Collect approximately two quarts of soil in a clean bucket and mix it thoroughly. Do not touch the soil with your hands – use disposable plastic gloves. Mix soil with soil probe or gloved hands. Then, fill a pint bag of the mixed soil to send to the laboratory for analysis. The samples taken should cover the entire field if similar crops are produced in all of one field. If crops differ in a field (flowers and beans in the same field), then the sampling should be completed by growing areas of each crop.

d. The east field and the west field should be sampled separately.

Published By: California Plant Health Association

GENERALIZED SOIL TEST INTERPRETATIVE GUIDE

Exhibit 6

ANALYTE	UNITS	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Organic Matter	Percent	<2.0	<2.0---3.0	>3.0
pH	pH	<6.0	6.0--7.0	>7.0
Soluable Salts (EC_e)	mmhos/cm	<0.7	.07--2.0	>2.0
Phosphorus (P1)	ppm	<30.0	30.0--50.0	>50.0
Sodium Bicarbonate	ppm	<15.0	15.0--25.0	>25.0
Potassium	% cation sat. ppm	<2.0 <150	2.0--5.0 150--200	>5.0 >200
Calcium	% cation sat.	<60.0	60.0--70.0	>70.0
Sodium	% cation sat.	<3.0	3.0--5.0	>5.0
Magnesium	% cation sat.	<10.0	10.0--20.0	>20.0
Chloride	ppm	<170	170--350	>350
Nitrogen (NO_3-N)	ppm	<10.0	10.0--25.0	>25.0
Sulfur (SO_4-S)	ppm	<10.0	10.0--15.0	>15.0
Boron (saturated paste extract)	ppm	<0.2	0.2--0.7	>0.7
Iron	ppm	<5.0	5.0--15.00	>15.0
Manganese	ppm	<2.0	2.0--10.0	>10.0
Copper	ppm	<0.8	.08--1.2	>1.2
Zinc	ppm	<0.7	.07--1.5	>1.5
Molybdenum	ppm	<0.1	0.1--0.2	>0.2

"Low"--nutrient may be inadequite
"Medium"--nutrient range may provide a safe growing environment
"Hight"--levels may cause problems for some crops

Each crop has specific requirements that may vary from the above table

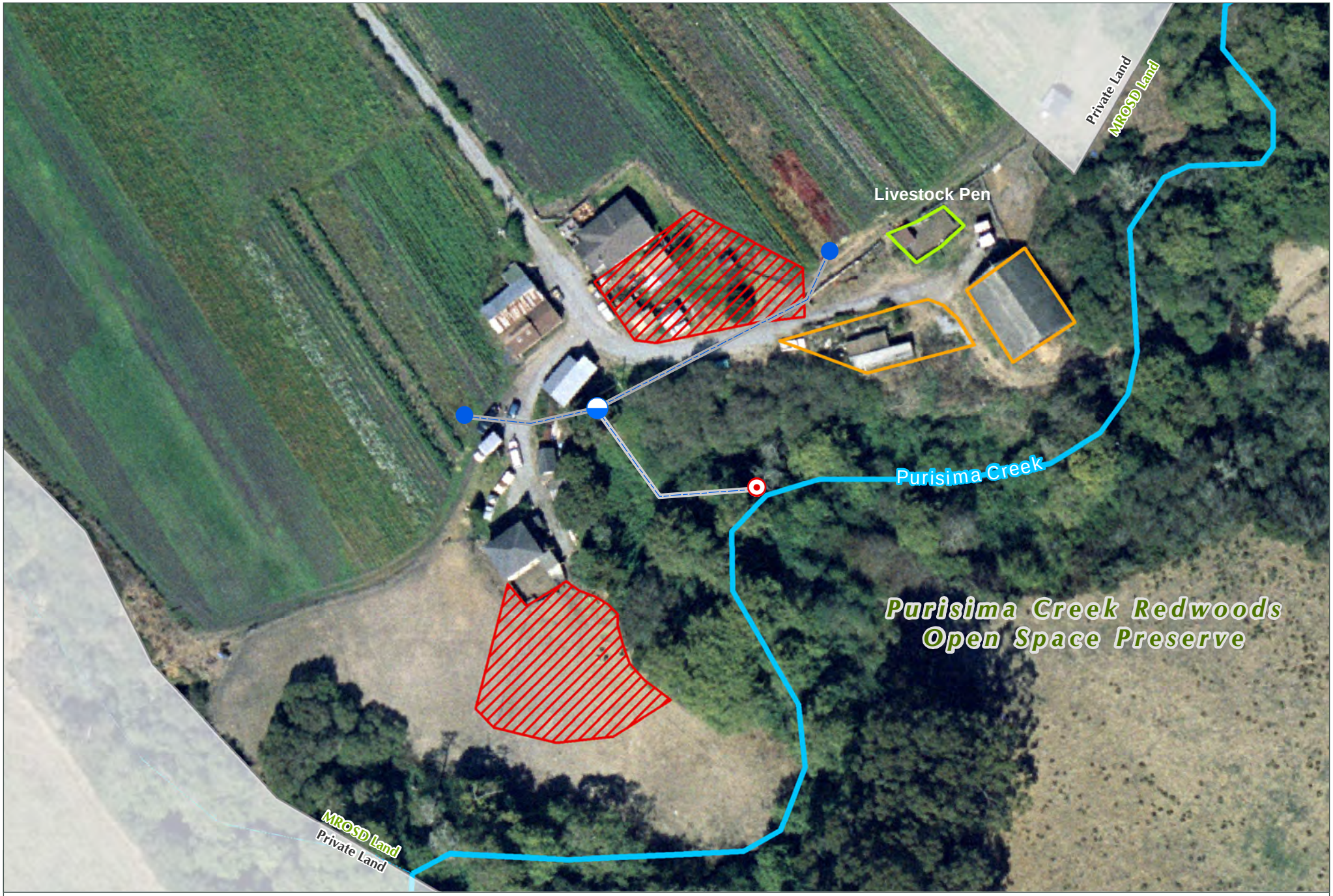

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Exhibit 7: Lobitos Ridge Farm Lease - Infrastructure

- Leach Field for Septic System
  No Cultivation or Parking
- Equipment Parking/Storage
- Livestock Pen
- Residential Water Pump & Irrigation Pump
- Water Storage Tanks & Potable Water Treatment
- Irrigation Water Valve
- Irrigation Water Pipeline

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

January 2011

N

0 25 50 100 Feet

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE

Exhibit 8

Responsibilities of Having an Owl Box

Thank you for your interest in owl boxes. Barn owls and Western screech owls will use artificial cavities in the form of nest boxes. There are many owl nest boxes available for purchase, however we feel our design is the most beneficial for the protection of the owls. The decision to put up an owl box should not be made lightly. There are responsibilities involved. These include:

- Annual cleaning out of the box within a narrow window of time (October through late November, Halloween through Thanksgiving), see cleaning instructions below.
- Commitment to ***not*** disturb nesting owls. All native birds are protected by Federal Law, especially when nesting. Any disturbance is a Federal offense. So, if you decide that your tree needs cutting down, or trimming, and there are owls using your box, you will have to wait until at least late October to make any changes to the tree.
- Protecting the owls from poisoning by not using rodenticides (rat & gopher poisons) and pesticides on your property, and confirming that they are not in use on adjacent properties.
- Notifying the Hungry Owl Project if you plan to move and whether you are taking the box or leaving it behind. **Note:** box cannot be moved during nesting season.
- Contacting a licensed wildlife hospital, the Hungry Owl Project, or your local humane society if you find an injured or orphaned owl.

If you feel comfortable with these responsibilities, and have the right habitat for barn or screech owls, we encourage you to install an owl box to help provide homes and protection for these beautiful, and beneficial, predators. Please note that the best way to benefit from the amazing hunting prowess of barn owls on your local rodent and gopher populations is to install more than one box, as the owl will not hunt directly beneath its nest because this could attract the attention of predators.

Cleaning Your Owl Box – (October – November)

Tools needed: rubber gloves, face mask, trowel or other scrapping tool or crow bar, trash bag or box, drill or other tool to open screws or eye hooks on clean out flap.

Always have a helper to hold the ladder steady, and to stand by while you are at the box. An owl may be roosting (sleeping) in your box, so try to peek into the box through the front entrance hole. If you see an owl, retreat and remove the ladder. Call HOP for advice.

Wear a mask and gloves. Owls create pellets of bones and fur that they regurgitate daily into the owl box. It might sound gross, but the pellets actually create a dry "carpet" that is soft and warm for the eggs to be laid on.

Once the clean-out flap and the top of the box are open, use your scraper or crow bar to loosen up the tightly compacted "carpet" inside. Scrape the carpet and all other debris into the trash bag, or box, or onto the ground (it's biodegradable!). You will get a good look at the remains of what your owls have been eating! You will likely find loose bones and possibly the desiccated remains of prey. You may possibly find the remains of deceased baby owls – sometimes not all of the babies survive. There may be some live insects in the box, usually beetles and the occasional maggot. Sometimes wasps nest in the boxes, these can be removed without the use of poisons, please call us for advice. Song birds or squirrels sometimes use the boxes during the summer, so some nesting material might be found. This can be removed. If the box is very wet inside, try to determine why – wetness can create bacteria and is unhealthy for the owls. After getting as much debris as possible out of the box, close and secure the flap. Do not leave any material inside the box—the owls will take care of creating a new "carpet." Close the trash bag or box and place in a trash receptacle. Repair any damage or wear that has occurred – check to see if any screws are coming loose and tighten them. Now your box is ready and waiting for a new owl family! Thank you for completing this messy, but important, task!

Exhibit 9

Agency Contact Information:

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
625 Miramontes Street, Suite 103
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
650-726-4660

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San Mateo Co. Ag Advisory Committee Meeting – 4/11/11

Comments Received:

1. Correct language / Change wording –
   (Sec. 1 – Farming Techniques-Organic or Conventional)

   'It sounds as though BMP's and IPM must only be applied to conventional farming techniques and not organic techniques. Language should be changed to make sure that both farming techniques are to utilize BMP's and IPM.'

2. Clarification / Add language –
   (Sec. 2 – Soil Management – Erosion and Sediment Control)

   'Clarify the definition of 'Grading' so that it can not be interpreted as field cultivation (disking, plowing, cultivating, etc.) of agricultural fields. Define grading as earth work on non-cultivated portions of the property such as the driveway, around structures, etc.'

3. Clarification / Language –
   (Sec. 2 – Soil Management – Soil Amendments and Fertilizer)

   'Every crop requires different mineral/nutrient requirements in the soil. We should not require the Ochoa's to maintain the soil nutrient content at a specific threshold based on our soil sampling if it does not meet the requirements of their crop. The committee feels that the language in the plan would force the Ochoa's to keep the soil nutrient content in a specific range or threshold and would not allow them to go above or below this threshold to address the growing needs of certain crops.'

   Perhaps we need to add language to address this concern or clarify. While we want the Ochoa's to maintain healthy nutrient levels in the soil, we don't want to limit them from potentially growing crops that have nutrient requirements outside the threshold set by the District.

4. Concerns
   (Re: Use of the term 'Organic')

   Conventional farmers can not spray organo-phosphates (essential for growing sprouts) within a 5 mile radius of any organic farming operation. There was concern that:
   a. Should the Lobitos farm ever become 'Certified Organic' that it would drastically impact other local, conventional farming operations.

b. The term ‘organic growing techniques’ utilized in the plan maybe interpreted as organic or potentially organic, limiting the application of organo-phosphates on nearby conventional farms.

They suggested utilizing the term ‘Least Toxic’ instead of ‘organic growing techniques’. They also encouraged us to include the term ‘least toxic’ in our discussion of IPM or treatment methods.

5. Question / Comment
(Other Items – page 7)

‘A neighbor expressed concern over the potential to set up a ‘roadside stand’ to sell product grown on the farm. It is understood that the District would follow the county permitting process if a stand were set up and it was noted that parking along Purisima Creek Road is extremely limited and posed a safety risk.’